

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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SECSTATE WASHDC 2770

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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JERUSALEM FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

USINFO FOR IOP/M

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION--SECRETARY'S MED EAST TRIP

FROM MAESTRONE

1. LEADING STROY IN AL AHAM ON MARCH 16 DEALS WITH "CRISIS" BETWEEN SECRETARY AND ISRAEL. ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT, ACCORDING TO AL AHAM, CONSIDERS PROPOSALS WHICH KISSINGER BROUGHT BACK FROM ASWAN UNSATISFACTORY. STROY, BASED ON WIRE SERVICES, REPORTS THAT SECRETARY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT "ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT ON EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS REFLECTS POSITION AS HE KNEW IT FROM TALKS WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS."

AL AHAM EXPLAINS THAT SITUATION BETWEEN SECRETARY AND ISRAELI GOVERNMENT BECAME SERIOUS WHEN TOP U.S. OFFICIAL ACCOMPANYING SECRETARY CHALLENGED FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT BY SAYING THAT RABIN AND OTHER ISRAELI NEGOTIATORS WHO ATTENDED MEETINGS WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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SECRETARY DID NOT EXPRESS THAT DEGREE OF DISSATISFACTION. SAME

U.S. OFFICIAL SAID SECRETARY EXPECTS TO RECEIVE ISRAELI RESPONSE ON SUNDAY SO THAT TALKS MAY CONTINUE. STROY ALSO REFERS TO LIKUD OPPOSITION AND DEMONSTRATIONS DEMANDING SECRETARY HALT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL.

2. AL AHAM ALSO REPORTS THAT SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD URGED SECRETARY TO (WORK OUT AGREEMENT ON) WITHDRAWAL FROM GOLAN DURING CURRENT TRIP AND TO ISSUE GUARANTEES THAT WITHDRAWAL WILL TAKE PLACE FOLLOWING DISENGAGEMENT ON EGYPTIAN FRONT. FROM AMMAN, AL AHAM REPORTS KING HUSSEIN'S STATEMENT PRIOR TO SECRETARY'S ARRIVAL THAT NO OVERALL SETTLEMENT WILL BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT FINAL SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND FULL ARAB SOVEREIGNTY OVER ARAB JERUSALEM.

3. REPORTING FROM ASWAN, AL AHAM'S HAMDI FOUAD SPECULATES THAT FOLLOWING SECRETARY'S SHUTTLE TO ASWAN MONDAY, "DIFFICULT PHASE OF HIS MISSION WILL BEGIN AND WILL REQUIRE FIVE SHUTTLES BETWEEN ASWAN AND TEL AVIV." FRENCH JOURNAL D'EGYPTE SITES FABURY AS SOURCE FOR THIS. FOUAD CALLS CURRENT PHASE OF SECRETARY'S MISSION "EXPLORATORY." FOUAD AND AL HOMHOURIYA'S HODA TWEFIK QUOTE "RESPONSIBLE EGYPTIAN SOURCE" THAT SADAT'S DISENGAGEMENT TALKS WITH SECRETARY COVERED ME QUESTION IN ITS ENTIRETY. FOUAD ADDS THAT "GOE BELIEVES THAT DISENGAGEMENT ON ALL FRONTS IS GENUINE PATH LEADING TO GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE." SAME SOURCE ADDED THAT IF SECOND DISENGAGEMENT ON EGYPTIAN FRONT IS REACHED, SECRETARY WILL PAY VISIT TO ME ONCE MORE TO ACHIEVE DISENGAGEMENT ON GOLAN. SAME SOURCE ALSO SAID THAT PALESTINIAN REIGHTS WERE DISCUSSED DURING KISSINGER-SADAT TALKS AND GOE "IS COMMITTED TO LIBERATION OF ARAB LANDS AND RESTORATION OF FULL PALESTINIAN RIGHTS."

4. ALSO FROM ASWAN, AL HOMHOURIYA'S HODA TEWFIK ALSO SAYS "RELIABLE SOURCE" DEFINES GOE POSITION AS FOLLOWS:

A. EGYPT REFUSES TO INTRODUCE POLITICAL ELEMENTS INTO DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT.

B. NEW AGREEMENT IS PURELY MILITARY AGREEMENT.

C. MINIMUM EGYPTIAN DEMAND FOR WITHDRAWAL IS RETURN OF PASSES AND OIL FIELD.
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D. EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS DELIVERED TO SECRETARY IN ASWAN INCLUDE DETAINS ON TYPE AND AMOUNTS OF WEAPONS IN AND ON BOTH SIDES OF WITHDRAWAL AREA. TEWFIK QUOTES INFORMED SOURCE AS SAYING THAT WITHDRAWAL AREA STATED IN NEW AGREEMENT IS FAR LARGER THAN THAT STATED IN FIRST AGREEMENT. THEREFORE TWICE AS MUCH TIME WILL BE NEEDED TO DISMANTLE AND REMOVE MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND AIRFIELDS FROM SINAI AREA.

SAME SOURCE STATED THAT PROPOSED JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE WILL BE INDENTICAL TO 1949 JOINT ARMISTICE COMMITTEE. STORY ALSO QUOTES UPI FROM TEL AVIV THAT, DESPITE COOL RECEPTION, ISRAEL WILL PROVIDE SECRETARY WITH DEFINITE ISRAELI REPLY THAT HE WILL TAKE WITH HIM TO EGYPT. STORY ALSO SPECULATES THAT SECRETARY ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE RABIN THAT DEFINITE EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS MAY CONSTITUTE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

5. IN AL AKHBAR'S TREATMENT OF SECRETARY'S TRIP TO TEL AVIV, DAMASCUS AND AMMAN IT QUOTES WIRE SERVICES AS REPORTING THAT SECRETARY WAS ANNOYED WITH ISRAELI OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT DESCRIBING EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS AS "INSUFFICIENT AND UNSATISFACTORY." STORY QUOTES AFP VIEW THAT SECRETARY TRIED HARD TO CONVINCE RABIN THAT DEFINITE EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS MAY CONSTITUTE BASIS FOR FRUITFUL TALKS DESPITE EGYPTIAN REFUSAL TO END STATE OF BELLIGERENCY. STORY ALSO QUOTES REUTERS' REPORT THAT RABIN FACES DIFFICULTY IN CONVINCING HIS CABINET MEMBERS THAT ISRAEL CAN STAGE WITHDRAWAL FROM GAZA AND OILFIELDS. RABIN, REUTERS EXPLAINED, DID NOT STATE SUCH VIEW OFFICIALLY IN CABINET MEETINGS, BUT PRIVATELY EXPRESSED READINESS TO RECOMMEND SUCH WITHDRAWAL IF SADAT IS WILLING TO ISSUE PLEDGE ENDING STATE OF BELLIGERENCY.

6. EDITORIAL, AL AHROM REITERATES GOE VIEW THAT ENDING STATE OF BELLIGERENCY CAN ONLY BE DONE ON RECIPROCAL BASES, I.E. PLEDGE SHOULD BE MADE ON ALL FRONTS WITHOUT EXCEPTION. IN HIS DAILY COLUMN, EDITOR ALI HAMDY EL GAMMAL MAINTAINS THAT SECRETARY HIMSELF REALIZES THAT EGYPT CANNOT ACCEPT ISRAELI DEMAND THAT STATE OF BELLIGERENCY BE ENDED. ARTICLE CONTRIBUTED BY SAYED YASSIN SAYS THAT PEACE WILL SHARPEN SOCIAL AND ETHNIC STRIFES WITHIN ISRAEL, WHILE CONTRIBUTOR IBRAHIM KARAWAN SAYS THAT ISRAELI PRESS UNCLASSIFIED

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CONSIDERS "ESCALATION OF TENSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AS EVIDENCE THAT AGREEMENTS WORKED OUT BY SECRETARY ARE VAGUE." AL AHRAM'S CARTOON BY SALAH JAHEEN MAINTAINS THAT ISRAEL SEEKS TO HAMPER SECRETARY'S MISSION UNTIL OIL IN SINAI IS DEPLETED. AL AKHBAR SAYS CURRENT EFFORTS TO DEFUSE THE EXPLOSIVE SITUATION ARE HAMPERED BY "IMPOSSIBLE AND ILLOGICAL" ISRAELI CONDITION THAT EGYPT SHOULD END STATE OF BELLIGERENCY. EILTS

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